1:Marshall E-5 (1952-1953) 1959 FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung

183 gathered (about 175) had married lineal kin or collaterals, at least through first cousins.
582 However, informants told about two /Kung men in B.P. who had married their
835 cousins: we could not find out which type of cousins. What was interesting was the
605 attitude of the informants. They said the men should not have done this, but there was no talk of madness or danger or expressions of horror such as we had observed when incest was spoken of at other times. No punishments, social or divine, had been meted out, according to the informants. Some said they thought it was not too bad a thing for a man to do, especially if the woman were a FaSiDa, who is not, they said, so much like your sister as a MoSiDa. I believe that the anomaly of the system's allowing joking with cousins, although it prohibits marriage, mitigates, in all probability, the force of the incest taboo and accounts to some extent for the tolerance towards the breakers of this rule.

How much deviation there is in marrying second and third cousins we do not
[124] know. We soon gave up trying to gather data on relatives more remote than first cousins because informants so often did not know the names and we could not rely on the information.

582 One account came to our ears of a man who had violated the incest taboo with his
627 stepdaughter. He was /Gunda Legs, the MoBr of old Gau of Band 1, and he lived
684 with Band 9. He is dead now. What he did was so outside the good and the normal
835 that it could be accounted for only by madness. He had drunk the milk of a young
159 gemsbok doe, the people told us, and this is what had made him mad. Something
[753] came from his forehead and went in and out, a sort of swelling. After that he fell in love with his stepdaughter, ≠Nisa, and married her, and both she and her mother were his wives at the same time. The people 'laughed at him' so much because he had made such a horrifying 'mistake' that he took his stepdaughter and lived apart from his band—the only instance we know of a man and woman living alone. They had a son, ≠Toma, who died young. When /Gunda's madness waned he sometimes came back to his people; he would go again when his madness returned. People said they did not understand why ≠Nisa went with him. They mocked at her, said that she was *dole*, 'bad', and that it was 'nonsense' to fall in love with one's stepfather.
● [154] Our informants laughed uneasily when they told about it as they laugh when they tell of vultures eating their meat or of being chased by fierce bees when they try to take a honeycomb. There came to my mind a penetrating remark made by //Kushay, the wife of /Qui in Band 1, which might, I thought, be applied to ≠Nisa. //Kushay had said, 'When a Bushman girl goes against the customs of her people and people talk about her and say she is bad, she is very unhappy. She would hear the people talking and be ashamed and would come to them angry—angry because she is ashamed', or, I thought, go away because she is ashamed.

183 Deviations occur in the fourth category. Two men we met had married women
553 with the same names as their mothers. A man named /Ti/kay married the daughter of
582 another /Ti/kay, and there were other such instances. /Qui, the husband of the above
608 //Kushay in Band 1, said he proposed to do this himself. The girl's family had flatly
835 refused, but he was going to keep on trying. ≠Toma said he would not do this but he sees some people doing these things. There are not enough women whom a man may properly marry, he said, and he would be in favour of changing the marriage prohibitions among name relatives so that a man need avoid only ugly women.

5:Marshall E-5 (1950-1955) 1957 FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung

ugly, slovenly, or wanton. The women retaliate, perhaps accusing the men of being worthy only of castration or of unfaithful wives. We noticed that the /Kung do not call each other sons of bitches. They are not concerned with lineage.

It is not thought proper to make blatant or insulting sexual jokes with old persons. The deference which is shown to aged persons is expressed by moderation, and the joking relationship between an old person and a considerably younger person, especially between grandparents and grandchildren, becomes a cosy friendly intimacy without the sexual emphasis.

Though the /Kung enjoy the joking relationship, it was our impression that their primary concern lay in the prohibition against joking. They said it would be 'madness' to joke with persons they should not joke with. When they meet strangers they do not dare to joke until they find out whether or not it is proper for them to do so. They gave us /Kung names. This placed us in the scheme of things and people could know what their status was with us.

The /Kung say they 'fear' (*koa*) to joke when they should not and they 'fear' (*koa*) the persons with whom joking is forbidden. The word *koa* is the same word that they use when they say they fear a lion or a mamba. They also use it to mean avoid. We think it holds the same combination of fear and respect that our word holds when we say we fear the Lord.

A /Kung told us that joking was not only amusing but that it served a good purpose in teaching people, young men especially, to hold their tempers and to have poise in their social relations. We thought that joking served a good purpose in providing an outlet in laughter for aggression and various social restraints, but we wondered if it had not primarily been developed as a response to restraints upon sexual intercourse. Incest must be a concern among a people who live in small bands of consanguineous kin and close affines, bands which are isolated for the most part within their own territories except for more or less infrequent visits to other bands. The restraints which are considered to be good and necessary may be strengthened by the symbol of avoidance of sexual joking. Respect due to a parent has perhaps come to be associated with this symbol and this may account for joking being restricted with parents of both sexes. It seems that respect in general is not required between siblings; only sexual restraint is required and this is symbolized by the restriction in joking imposed on siblings of opposite sex, whereas ego may joke with a sibling of the same sex. It is possible that the culture allows joking between grandparents and grandchildren (with the rather few exceptions when the factor of the name intervenes to classify them in the non-joking category) because joking is associated with a welcome ease and intimacy of relationship and the great difference in age removes the necessity of symbolizing sexual restraint between them.

The Name-Relationship as a Factor in Social Consolidation

The /Kung believe that the name is somehow a part of the entity of a person and that when one is named for a person one partakes of that person's entity in some way and in some degree. Informants could give us no further elucidation of this belief.

It seems evident that, when incorporated into the system of kinship terminology, the belief has produced the homonymous method of applying terms. It is our conjecture that the homonymous method was added to the system after the generational

method had been established.

12: Marshall E-5 (1951-1959) 1961 FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung

who agreed and supported each other. From where they sat, but not all at once and not in an excited babble, they made their remarks clearly, with quite long pauses between. Some expressed themselves in agreement with /U as she recounted Khuan//a's faults and deviations, past and present. Khuan//a's family and friends, who had moved to sit near her, denied the accusations from time to time, but did not talk as much or as loudly as /U. Khuan//a muttered or was silent. /U said she disapproved of her sister's daughter marrying the son of such a woman, but would reconsider her position if Khuan//a gave the expected gift to Gao Medicine. The talk lasted about twenty minutes. At that point Khuan//a got up and walked away and the ' talk ' subsided to /U's mutterings and others' low conversation. In a few days Khuan//a gave Gao Medicine a present, not the gift in question, but one which satisfied Gao, and, as they said, ' they all started again in peace '.

There is a third form of verbal expression which might be called a ' shout ' rather than a ' talk ', but as far as I know the /Kung have no special name for it. It is a verbal explosion. Fate receives the heat of the remarks in a ' shout '.

We were present on two such occasions, one in 1952, the other in 1953. Both were in response to the burning of scherms. In both instances little children, whose mothers had taken their eyes off them though they were only a few feet away, had picked up burning sticks from the fire, had dropped them on the soft, dry bedding grass in the scherms and, at the first burst of flame, had sensibly run outside unscathed. On the first occasion, the two children, who were about three years old, were frightened and were soothed and comforted by their mothers and other relatives. They were not scolded. On the second occasion, Khuan//a, the two-year-old granddaughter of Old ≠Toma and /Gam, had set fire to her grandparents' scherm. She was not apparently frightened at all and was found placidly chewing her grandfather's well-toasted sandal. She was not scolded either. What was especially interesting was the behaviour of the Bushmen. On both occasions they rushed to the burning scherms, shouting all at once, in extremely loud, excited voices, volcanic eruptions of words. The men made most of the noise, but the women were also talking excitedly. No one tried to do anything, nor could they, for the scherms burned like the fiery furnace. I asked the interpreters to stand close to one person at a time and try to hear what he said. People were telling where they had been when the fire started, why they had not got there sooner. They shouted that mothers should not take their eyes off their children, that the children might have been burned. They lamented the objects which had been destroyed—all in the greatest din I have ever heard humans produce out of themselves. It went on for about eight or ten minutes in bursts, then tapered off for another ten. While Old ≠Toma's scherm was burning, he and his wife, /Gam, the great maker of beads, sat on one side weeping. After the shouting had subsided, a dozen or more people set about looking for Old ≠Toma's knife blade and arrow points and picking up what beads they could find for /Gam in the cooling ashes. The two instances of ' shouts ' provided examples of the vehemence which vocal expression can have and vividly illustrated the /Kung way of venting emotion in words.

There is still another kind of talk, not conversation, which I consider to be an outlet for tension and anxiety. We happened to hear it only in relation to anxiety about food and do not know if other concerns sometimes find expression in this way.

12: Marshall E-5 (1951-1959) 1961 FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung

It occurs in varying degrees of intensity. It is a repeating of something over and over and over again. For instance, whether it is actually so or not, someone may be reiterating that he has no food or that no one has given him food. The remarks are made in the presence of other individuals, but the other individuals do not respond in the manner of a discussion or conversation. In an extreme instance we saw a woman visitor go into a kind of semi-trance and say over and over for perhaps half an hour or so in ≠Toma's presence that he had not given her as much meat as was her due. It was not said like an accusation. It was said as though he were not there. I had the eerie feeling that I was present in someone else's dream. ≠Toma did not argue or oppose her. He continued doing whatever he was doing and let her go on.

All these ways of talking, I believe, aid the /Kung in maintaining their peaceful social relations by keeping everyone in touch with what others are thinking and feeling, releasing tensions, and keeping pressures from building up until they burst out in aggressive acts.

Aspects of Good Manners

In /Kung society good manners require that, when /Kung meet other /Kung who are strangers, all the men should lay down their weapons and approach each other unarmed. ≠Toma, leader of Band 1, approached us unarmed the first time we met. After we were accepted and given Bushman names, we were no longer strangers and we never observed the practice again.

Good manners require that visitors be received courteously and asked to sit by the fire. The woman whose fire it is may welcome the visitor by taking a pinch of the sweet smelling *ta* powder, which she carries in a little tortoise shell hung from her neck, and sprinkling it on the visitor's head in a line from the top of the head to the forehead.

Good manners in eating express restraint. A person does not reveal eagerness or take more than a modest share. When a visitor comes to the fire of a family who are preparing food or eating, he should sit at a little distance, not to seem importunate, and wait to be asked to share. On several occasions we gave small gifts of corned beef to be shared with a group. The person who received the food from us would take only a mouthful. Once an old headman only licked his fingers. The lump of food would be passed from one to another. Each would take a modest bite. The last person often got the most. I found it moving to see so much restraint about taking food among people who are all thin and often hungry, for whom food is a source of constant anxiety. We observed no unmannerly behaviour, no cheating and no encroachment about food. Although informants said that quarrels had occasionally occurred in the past between members of a band over the time to go to gather veldkos, and although we observed expressions of dissatisfaction, no quarrels of any kind arose over food during our observations.

Good manners in general should be inoffensive. Any behaviour which is likely to stir up trouble is regarded with apprehension and disapproval by the /Kung. In view of this, the joking relationship has its interesting side. Men and women who have the joking relationship insult each other in a facetious way and also point out actual faults or remark on actual episodes which embarrass a person. Everyone joins in the

12: Marshall E-5 (1951-1959) 1961 FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung

182 431 another through the seasons, always going back and forth between food and water, they carry their young children and their belongings. With plenty of most materials at hand to replace artifacts as required, the /Kung have not developed means of permanent storage and have not needed or wanted to encumber themselves with surpluses or duplicates. They do not even want to carry one of everything. They borrow what they do not own. With this ease, they have not hoarded, and the [556] accumulation of objects has not become associated with status. Instead of keeping things, they use them to express generosity and friendly intent, and to put people ● [159] under obligation to make return tokens of friendship. And, even more specifically, in my opinion, they mitigate jealousy and envy, to which they are prone, by passing things on to others. These are the objectives in gift-giving.

431 Except, as ≠Toma said, that it would be surprising to see a man give a present to a woman who was not related to him (and vice versa, I imagine), anyone may give to anyone. Degree or kind of kinship or affinity, having the joking relationship or lacking it, impose no requirements or restrictions, nor does status in the community in a conventional way. We did hear people say, however, that a headman may feel that he should lean well to the generous side in his giving, for his position as head- [602] man sets him out from the others a little and he wants whatever attention this attracts not to be envious. Someone remarked that this could keep a headman poor.

The times of giving are determined almost entirely by the individual's convenience. The /Kung do not know their birthdays or anniversaries and have no special days of the year which they mark by giving gifts. Gifts are required by convention on only three ceremonial occasions. The type or quantity of the gift is not patterned but it should be generous. The occasions are betrothals and weddings, when the [585] parents exchange gifts and give to the young couple, and the ceremony of a baby's [854] first haircut, when the */gu/na*, the person for whom the baby is named, should give him a fine present.

Relatives give to young people with the idea of setting them up in life. Gao Beard gave a spear and a kaross to his FaSiHuSo, saying it was his duty to see that the boy got some things because among the boy's relatives he was the most able to do so. The boy's father was very old, he explained. People expect to wait a long time for young people to make return gifts.

The two rigid requirements in gift-giving are that one must not refuse a proffered gift and that one must give in return. Demi said that, even if he might prefer not to be obligated to someone, he would accept and prepare to make his return gift. If a gift were to be refused, he continued, the giver would be terribly angry. He would [598] say, ' Something is very wrong here.' This could involve whole groups in tensions, bad words, taking sides—even ' a talk ' might occur—just what the /Kung do not want. Demi said it does not happen: a /Kung never refuses a gift. And a /Kung does not fail to give in return. ≠Toma said that would be ' neglecting friendship '. A person would know that others thought him ' far-hearted ' and ' this would worry him '.

In reciprocating one does not give the same object back again but something of comparable value. The interval of time between receiving and reciprocating varied from a few weeks to a few years. Propriety requires that there be no unseemly haste. The giving must not look like trading.

Eyes-on-His-Feet

539

≠*Gao/na*'s younger brother-in-law, his *tsu/gama*, was named Eyes-on-His-Feet. He and ≠*Gao/na* went together to gather veldkos. They found *//karu*. After a time they came to a place where they wanted to stay and made a fire to roast the *//karu*. While they were sitting by the fire ≠*Gao/na* watched his *tsu/gama*'s feet and saw what looked like eyes. He tossed dust on them and the eyes blinked. ≠*Gao/na* said, 'These are really his eyes. His face is just smooth. His eyes are on his feet.' ≠*Gao/na* then asked the *tsu/gama* to lean over and press the *//karu* down into the ashes so that they would be all covered and would roast evenly. While the *tsu/gama* was doing this, ≠*Gao/na* threw coals on his feet and burned his eyes. This weakened the *tsu/gama* and ≠*Gao/na* was easily able to cover him all over with coals and roast him. While the *tsu/gama* was roasting there was a sound, *tsi i its ii tsi ii* (like meat sizzling), and the *tsu/gama* put a magic curse on ≠*Gao/na*'s mouth. When the *tsu/gama* was well roasted, ≠*Gao/na* ate all he could of him and put what he could not eat into a bag. He then tried to eat the *//karu*. He put one up to his mouth but his mouth would not open. He took another. It fell down to the side. ≠*Gao/na* could neither speak nor eat. He put the *//karu* into the bag with the remains of the *tsu/gama* and went back to his people in the werf and ordered them to make a dance to cure his mouth. He danced and danced with them and treated himself. While he was dancing, his wives took his bag and ate what was left of Eyes-on-His-Feet and all the *//karu* but one. [The story makes no point of the fact that they were eating their brother, albeit unknowingly, and one feels the omission hovering on the edge of being said.] Then they filled the bag with earth and put the *//karu* on top. Suddenly ≠*Gao/na*'s mouth was cured. He went to get his bag to finish his *tsu/gama*, put in his hand, took some earth, and tossed it into his mouth. He spat and swore at his wives. 'You silly women,' he said, 'what have you done?' And he thought what he would do to them. Next evening he called for another dance. A woman got up to dance but ≠*Gao/na* said, 'No, I want a good singer to dance with me, not you.' At last ≠Tamsa, the wife who had put the earth in the bag, got up to dance. She danced around ≠*Gao/na*, he danced around her, and when she came near he beat her fiercely on the stomach with his stick, until her stomach hung down below her groin. She fell unconscious and all the other wives took her and ran away and treated and treated her, crying, until she was all right. This is why Bushmen have stomachs that hang down. [826]

≠Toma and /Qui thought this was an awful story. /Qui said he did not know why ≠*Gao/na* ate his *tsu/gama*. He thought the reason could not have been mere hunger—after all, /Qui pointed out, he had *//karu*. There must have been some other reason. ≠Toma said, '≠*Gao/na* is evil. Even now he goes about killing people.' [811]

In another version the awfulness of eating a human being is modified by having Eyes-on-His-Feet come to life again. During the dance, ≠*Gao/na*'s stomach began to ache and make sounds and to swell, as with severe constipation. Suddenly it burst open and Eyes-on-His-Feet sprang out, as the wives had done after their laughter, whole and alive. In still another version ≠*Gao/na* turns ≠Tamsa into a bird called *chue*, a white and yellow bird about as big as a dove. This is one of the birds which the /Kung eat. They grab it in tree-holes when it is nesting. All my efforts to learn more about the possible identity of Eyes-on-His-Feet availed nothing. I wondered if he were not originally some veldkos, for instance, with a formation that suggested eyes, or an animal turned into a human being, or personified, like the paouw, but our /Kung informants did not know. The old people had not told them.

When my inquiries suggested to my informants that I expected them, possibly, to [154]

13: Marshall E-5 (1952-1955) 1962 FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung

539
[154] know something which they did not know, they became defensive. /U said that her mother was lazy and did not tell her stories. That was why she knew so little. Old Xama said that her mother died when she was young, so she had remained ignorant.

[522] The story of ≠*Gao!na*'s raping his son's pretty young wife is long and detailed and is recounted with humour and great enjoyment by the /Kung. ≠*Gao!na* tried to be away with the women alone while they were gathering veldkos. First he changed himself into a baby wildebeest, pretended that he was dead, and let the women pick him up. That plan did not work, so he made another. He disguised himself very cleverly as his own sister and went with the women to gather when they stayed overnight, and raped his son's wife, Te, in her sleep. In the morning when the women discovered who he was, he tried to persuade Te that it was not he but her husband, Kxoma, who had been there in the night, but Te knew it was not and was terribly upset. The women decided not to tell Kxoma or Khan//a, because they were afraid the sons would kill their father, so they all kept quiet when they returned and they lived in peace.

These stories have become very mixed up. In another version, the pit episode is used again. It is the sons' wives who dig the pit and entice ≠*Gao!na* to jump into it in revenge for ≠*Gao!na*'s ' spoiling ' Te. The substance in the pit is not faeces but ≠*Gao!na*'s own semen. The women shape the semen into the form of a young giraffe. When ≠*Gao!na* finally gets out of this pit he cleans himself by rubbing himself on trees.

≠Gao!na *and His Stupid Generosity*

≠*Gao!na* sometimes prevails in his endeavours, but he has lapses and often appears to be far from clever. In one story he is both stupid and generous—too generous. This is a very long story in which Kxoma and Khan//a, his sons, kill an eland. Lions come and kill the sons. With the help of *zam zam*, the little tortoise, who was a person then and another brother of his wives, ≠*Gao!na* kills the lions by magic and restores his sons to life. The story ends in their all returning to the werf with the eland meat. They walk along. They meet a man. They give him gifts of meat. This man quickly hides his meat in a tree, then, dodging along behind some bushes, he runs ahead and meets ≠*Gao!na* and his party again. The sons and *zam zam* say, ' We have already given you some meat', but ≠*Gao!na* cannot remember and gives meat again. A third and a fourth time the man runs ahead and ≠*Gao!na* gives again,
[522] in this way. [Dam and /Qui were speechless with laughter acting this out.] For the fifth time the man runs ahead and ≠*Gao!na* does not remember him and gives him his last bundle of meat. ≠*Gao!na* would now have to return to his wives without any meat for them, but instead he hits his buttocks very hard. He hits them and hits them until he knocks his insides out. He cuts his insides into pieces, like meat, and takes them to his werf. Others have meat but he has none except his own insides. He cooks them for his wives. They say the meat is too tough to eat and ask, ' Why do the others have nice eland meat and you only this? ' He says it is eland meat but that it has become dry. ≠*Gao!na* and his wives go hungry.

A story about ≠*Gao!na*'s getting fire was told in several versions. In one of them the name *Hwve* was used. That was the only time I heard the protagonist of the tales called by any name but ≠*Gao!na*.

≠Gao!na *and the Fire Sticks*

There was a time when no one had fire except one man whose name was /Kai /Kini. He had fire and the name of this fire was *doro*. [The word for fire is *da*.] *Doro* was made with fire

13: Marshall E-5 (1952-1955) 1962 FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung

776 The concept of ≠*Gao/na* as a powerful creator and a good being is based in the past. Schapera gives the following accounts: 'Vedder, who studied the Kung at Tsumeb, . . . speaks of *Hiwe* as a good being to whom the people attribute the creation and maintenance of all things.'[1] 'Lebzelter . . . says that all the groups [of Kung] investigated by him have "the belief in a supreme good being".'[2] The Western /Kung of the Oschimpoloveld believe he 'lives in a house in the sky to which the souls of the dead are brought. He is often prayed to, especially for rain and hunting, as well as in case of illness because he made all things and can do everything and knows everything, and he is given the first offering of the chase. The rain comes at his command as a mist out of the earth, and then falls down, thereupon making thunder and lightning.'[3]

Schapera also notes that Lebzelter reports that *Xu* of the Heikum is regarded almost everywhere among them 'as the creator of all things, including mankind, and he sends the rain. He is prayed to for rain, in sickness, before and after hunting, and before travel, and by the group at Uukualuthi he is also given the first-offerings of the chase, as among the Kung of the Oschimpoloveld. Almost everywhere he has neither wife nor children; it is only among the Eastern Kung that mention is made of these. He is regarded everywhere as benevolent and good, but appears to have no connection with the moral life of the people.'[4]

[761 811] This god of the /Kung and the Heikum in the past was not the death-giver. The old *//Gauwa*, as I shall presently describe, held that role. But now, in believing that the great god of the east is all-powerful, the /Kung have logically attributed to him the control over death, and hold him ultimately responsible for it. But their concept of ≠*Gao/na*, first and foremost, is that of the creator.

776 773 ●[154] It is said that ≠*Gao/na* created himself. One informant, /Tik/ay, claimed that he came out of the water, but others said they were not told this by the old people. I could discover no formulated myth of creation which everybody knew or anything which told how he created himself. People simply said they did not know. /U turned on me and asked me if I knew. When I said I did not, she snapped, How, then, did I expect her to know? After creating himself, ≠*Gao/na* created the lesser god and then their two wives. It was stated quite specifically that there were only two wives and that the gods never took human wives. This is in contrast to the old ≠*Gao/na* of the tales, who gives the impression that he had a bevy of wives.

The great god created the earth and gave it its name, ≠*kxa*. In the earth he created holes for water and he created water. They were not told just how he created these things, the people said. He has an iron of his own with which he works, a */ka* (*/ka* is metal). Some metal tool is what he had, a special one. They 'did not see it', they said, and do not know just what kind of a tool it is or what substances he may have worked with, but they know that he is the creator and the commander of metal.

After the earth, ≠*Gao/na* made the sky in a dome over the earth, and he made rain, */ga*. He made gentle female rain, */gadi*, and violent male rain, */ga/go*. The people do not say freely the word */ga/go* because they fear the violent rains. They use a respect word, */noi*, when they speak to the rain and plead with it to be gentle. ≠*Gao/na* made thunder and lightning.

After the rain, he made the sun. Sun is a 'death thing' which dries up the veldkos

[1] Schapera, op. cit., p. 183. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid., p. 184. [4] Ibid., pp. 184–5.

13: Marshall E-5 (1952-1955) 1962 FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung

Why does the lightning not go and die somewhere and leave us alone and just let a gentle rain give us water?' 782

If someone were struck and killed by lightning, Gao Medicine said he would say,

'*Hishe*, why have you taken this person? Why do you strike us with storm? You cannot always be good; you keep changing. You created all things and are present in every movement. Why must you do ill?'

About another storm, Gao Medicine said,

'It is */Nau* who makes these things. He is scolding us because we are his children. It is because of our bad ways we are so punished. We must not complain. This is a good time, the time of rain. We must not complain.'

When the people are pleased they thank ≠*Gao/na* and say, 'This is how you must serve your children.'

The /Kung pray directly to *//Gauwa* as well as to ≠*Gao/na*. One old man named Tuka/na made a prayer into a song and taught it to his people. The men sometimes sing it when they are walking along in the veld on hunting trips. It says in effect: [533]

'*//Gauwa* must help us that we kill an animal.
//Gauwa, help us. We are dying of hunger.
//Gauwa does not give us help.
He is cheating. He is bluffing.
//Gauwa will bring something for us to kill next day
After he himself hunts and has eaten meat,
When he is full and is feeling well.'

The song then changes to the past tense and tells how *//Gauwa* favoured them in the past and gave them luck in the hunt and they ate and afterwards the man said to the women:

'You must sing well.
We are happy now.
Our hearts are shining.
I shall put on my rattles,
And put on my headband,
And put a feather in my hair
To explain to *//Gauwa* how happy we are that he has helped us and that we have eaten.
My heart is awake.
When we do not have meat
My heart is sad from hunger
Like an old man, sick and slow.
When we have meat my heart is lively.

The concerns and anxieties of these people are manifest in their prayers. The pervasive, unremitting anxiety about food becomes vividly apparent. The concept that ≠*Gao/na* has great power and that he is not evil incarnate, but has a dual nature which can feel pity as well as displeasure, makes beneficence a possibility. The /Kung believe that, influenced by the medicine men's scolding or by supplication, he may change his evil intent, and this gives them hope. [154 776]

13: Marshall E-5 (1952-1955) 1962 FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung

shriek and gurgle. They blow in his ears to open them. They take sweat from their armpits and rub him. Some fall over on to him in trance themselves and are in turn rubbed and cared for by the others. The women must sing and clap ardently while a man is in deep trance. He needs the good medicine of the music to protect him.

The curing dance draws people of a Bushman band together into concerted action as nothing else does. They stamp and clap and sing with such precision that they become like an organic being. In this close configuration—together—they face the gods. They do not plead, as they do in their individual supplications, for the favour of the divine, all-powerful beings, and do not praise them for goodness. Instead, the medicine men, on behalf of the people, releasing themselves from ordinary behaviour by trance and overcoming fear and inaction, throw themselves into combat with the gods and try to force them with hurled sticks and hurled words to take away the evils they might be bringing.

The violence and excitement of the ceremony have the effect, as in a drama, I believe, of releasing the emotions of the people and purging them, in Aristotle's sense. Fear and hostility find outlet and the people have acted together to protect themselves. In this there is solace and hope.

Résumé

LA RELIGION DES BOSCHIMANS /KUNG

Les Boschimans /Kung de la région de Nyae Nyae dans le sud-ouest de l'Afrique croient qu'il existe deux dieux — le grand créateur, qui habite dans l'est du ciel, où le soleil se lève, et le petit dieu qui est subordonné au grand dieu, et qui habite dans l'ouest du ciel où le soleil se couche.

Le grand dieu possède sept noms divins, que les /Kung ont peur de prononcer, et un seul nom humain. Certains de ces noms (d'après Schapera ce sont *Hishe*, *Hawe* et *Kxo*) indiquent que le concept du grand dieu tire son origine des croyances anciennes soutenues par d'autres Boschimans et par les Hottentots. Ces noms sont associés avec un être suprême bien disposé. Divers groupes de Boschimans croyaient dans un esprit malfaisant, un 'avant-coureur de la mort', *//Gauwa*. D'après la croyance actuelle des /Kung de la région de Nyae Nyae, le grand dieu a fait du petit dieu son homonyme en lui accordant tous ses noms divins (mais non son nom human), et *//Gauwa* est un des sept noms divins qui sont attribués aux deux dieux. Le nom humain ≠*Gao/ua*, le vieux ≠*Gao*, est celui du protagoniste de plusieurs vieux contes bizarres, un être ayant des pouvoirs surnaturels, mais ressemblant à un homme et soumis à toutes les frustrations humaines. Les /Kung ont amalgamé l'ancien protagoniste et le grand dieu en ce qui concerne le nom, mais ils ont modifié l'image.

Le grand dieu s'est d'abord créé lui-même, et ensuite il a créé le petit dieu. Pour chacun d'eux, il a créé une épouse qui a donné naissance à des enfants. Il a créé la terre et le ciel, la femme et l'homme et il a donné des noms à toutes choses. Il a donné le nom de son épouse, Khwova, à la première femme, et son propre nom ≠*Gao* au premier homme. Le grand dieu et le petit dieu s'intéressent principalement à l'humanité. Ni l'un ni l'autre n'est associé essentiellement avec le bien ou le mal à l'égard de l'homme; tous les deux peuvent apporter de grands biens, tels que la pluie, la nourriture et les enfants, mais aussi la mort, la maladie

15: Marshall E-5 (1951-1961) 1965
FX10 Bushmen FX10
!Kung

224 602 they are present, and to other kin, affines, and friends who are there, possibly only in small quantities by then.

Everyone who receives meat gives again, in another wave of sharing, to his or her parents, parents-in-law, spouses, offspring, siblings, and others. [574] This meat may be cooked and the quantities small. Visitors receive small amounts of cooked meat from their hosts. It ends in everybody getting some meat.

224 431 In the later waves of sharing, when the primary distribution and primary kinship obligations have been fulfilled, the giving of meat from one's own portion has the quality of gift giving. !Kung society requires at this point only that a person should give with reasonable generosity in proportion to what he has received and not keep more than an equitable amount for himself, and that the person who receives a gift of meat must give a reciprocal gift of meat at some time in the future. People give to whom they please, this time to some, next time to others, more generously or less generously [571] according to their own (to us often unfathomable) reasons. We are certain, however, that the motives are the same as in gift giving in general: the person gives to measure up to what is expected of him, to make friendly gestures, to win favor, to repay past favors and obligations, and to enmesh others in future obligation.

224 431 181 [154] [183] Aside from the practical advantage of using up meat while it is still fresh, the !Kung custom of meat sharing has enormous social value. It does a great deal to mitigate tensions. The fear of hunger is lessened. People are sustained by a web of mutual obligation. Moreover, they are fully conscious of these values, and the custom is so strongly established and so faithfully followed that the idea of not sharing is virtually unthinkable to the !Kung.

422 262 264 Meat is not habitually cooked and eaten as a family meal among the !Kung. When an individual receives a portion he owns it outright. He may give and share it further, as he wishes, but it never becomes family or group property. The men, women, and children may cook their pieces when and as they wish, often roasting bits in the coals and hot ashes and eating them alone at odd times. Or someone may start a big pot boiling and several people will bring their pieces to put into it at the same time, each taking his own piece out when it is cooked.

The sense of possessing one's own piece personally is, I believe, very [261] important to the !Kung. It gives one the responsibility of choosing when to eat one's meat and struggling with hunger as best one can when it is finished, without occasion or excuse for blaming others for eating more than their share.

224 261 It has often been reported that, when Bushmen kill an animal, they gorge themselves until they can hardly walk. We have seen the Nyae Nyae !Kung eat hearty meals of meat when plenty appeared and they had been long without, but nothing more than we considered a normal amount.

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The Ceremonial Curing Dance A medicine man is going into a trance.

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to cast the sickness out, hurling it into the darkness back to *//Gauwa* or the *//gauwasi*, who are there beyond the firelight, with a sharp, yelping cry of "*kai kai kai*."

The medicine men are usually only in shallow trance at this point, but, when the curing has been going on for some time, they begin to reach a state of patterned frenzy. They no longer go around to the people, their spasms of grunting and shrieking become more frequent and violent, their stomachs heave, they stagger and sway. They rush to the fire, trample it, pick up the coals, set fire to their hair. They believe that fire activates the medicine in them. People hold them to keep them from falling and beat out the flames. The medicine men rush out into the darkness, where *//Gauwa* and the *//gauwasi* are lurking. They hurl burning sticks and swear at them. "Filthy face!" they screech. "Take away the sickness you have brought. You are bad. You want to kill us. Go away. . . . *Hishe*, you are a liar. This man will not die." At this point the medicine man may fall down in deep trance and appear to be unconscious or semiconscious, with eyes closed, stiff as a board, unable to walk. This stage of trance may last only a brief time or may continue for hours—even into the next day. Gradually it is resolved and the medicine man takes up his normal activities.

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The !Kung believe that at the time of deep trance the medicine man's spirit leaves his body and goes out to meet *//Gauwa* and the *//gauwasi*. They call this "half death." It is a dangerous time. The women must continue to sing the medicine music. The man's body must be watched over, rubbed, and kept warm by other medicine men who are in less deep trance.

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The violence and excitement of the ceremony have the effect, as in a

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15: Marshall E-5 (1951-1961) 1965
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drama, of releasing the emotions of the people and purging them, in the Aristotelian sense. Fear and hostility find an outlet and the people have acted together to protect themselves. In this there are support and solace and hope.

CHANGE

Today (1962) the pattern of life for the Nyae Nyae !Kung has begun to change radically. Many Bushmen of other language groups have had prolonged contact with the Bantu peoples among whom they live, and some have worked on Europeans' farms. Systematic studies of their social changes are lacking. The Nyae Nyae !Kung, as described here, had contact with Herero and Tswana neighbors in trade, but this contact did not appear to change the social structure of the independent !Kung. They are only now beginning to feel the impact of European contact. They were remote; they are no longer so. When, in 1951, we first worked our way to their area from the outposts of the farm lands, we were eight arduous days en route, in trackless, waterless country of bush and heavy sand, our four trucks heavy with water and petrol, equipment and supplies. Today a well-cleared track gives access in a day. Farmers began to come into the area to get the Bushmen to work for them and have their eyes upon the land.

The government of South West Africa, realizing the problem of the Bushmen, has appointed one of their most competent administrators of native affairs to be Bushman Affairs Commissioner, and is supplying him with funds and equipment. He and his wife are in the Nyae Nyae area and are working with several families of !Kung. He is leading one group of them into agriculture and this year they harvested a crop of corn. Others of the men are employed in road building and are being paid a cash wage, currently a shilling a day. It is too early to say what will happen to their social forms in so radical a change, which ones they will lose entirely, which they will retain and adapt to new conditions. All we know is that the !Kung who are taking part in the experiment have expressed themselves as willing and anxious to try to develop a new way of life.

NOTES

(1) Some of the ethnographic material used here has been previously published in my articles in *Africa* which are cited in the bibliography appended to this chapter. The ethnographic material is used with the permission of the International African Institute and the editor of *Africa*.

(2) Skeletal remains of Bushmen are found associated with late stone age implements in South Africa, but not with early or middle stone age (Schapera